

Request for Reconsideration:

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation that the Examiner indicates that claims 3-16 contain allowable subject matter, and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. By this amendment, Applicant is canceling claims 2 and 3, and amending independent claim 1 to incorporate the allowable subject matter of originally-filed claims 2 and 3, placing claim 1 in condition for allowance. Further, Applicant is amending claims 4-7 to depend from amended claim 1. Thus, claims 1 and 4-16 are pending in the application. No new matter is added by these amendments, and the amendments are fully supported by the specification. Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner enter the foregoing amendments, and reconsider the above-captioned patent application in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Remarks:

1. Rejections and Objections

The Office Action objects to claims 3-16 for being dependent from a rejected base claim, but indicates that claims 3-16 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as allegedly being rendered obvious by U.S. Patent No. 5,624,240 to Kawaguchi et al. (“Kawaguchi”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,513,553 to Gleasman et al. (“Gleasant”). Applicant respectfully traverses.

2. Obviousness Rejections.

As noted above, claims 1 and 2 stand rejected as allegedly being rendered obvious by Kawaguchi in view of Gleasman. Applicant is amending independent claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter described in original claims 2 and 3. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of independent claim 1 in view of these amendments.

Claims 4-16 ultimately depend, either directly or indirectly, from independent claim 1, and, thus, incorporate each and every element of claim 1, as well as additional allowable subject matter. “If an independent claim is non-obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious.” MPEP 2143.03 (citations omitted). Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner withdraw the objections to dependent claims 4-16.

Conclusion:

Applicant respectfully submits that the above-captioned patent application, as amended, is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that the prosecution of this application may be furthered by discussing the application, in person or by telephone, with Applicant's representative, we would welcome the opportunity to do so. Applicant believes that no fees are due as a result of this responsive amendment. Nevertheless, in the event of any variance between the fees determined by Applicant and the fees determined by the PTO, please charge or credit any such variance to the undersigned's Deposit Account No. 02-0375.

Respectfully submitted,
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